


 WHAT'S  
HAPPENING  
IN

# Without Borders



## From the Editor

Gretchen Birbeck, MD, MPH

Without Borders recently highlighted a Global Stuff You Should Know contribution by Zhang et al. titled “Advances in pediatric neuro-oncology: Time to examine the issue of abandonment rates for care.” The authors noted that “Steady improvements have been achieved in outcomes for children with CNS tumors. However, there are huge discrepancies in this progress globally. Outcomes in low- and middle-income countries (LMIC) are significantly inferior compared to those in high-income countries.”

The article continues, “A systematic review conducted by our group to determine the magnitude and predictors of abandonment in pediatric CNS tumors in LMICs showed a severe lack of published data in this field.<sup>1</sup> Studies that did publish abandonment rates (ARs) often censored these patients when performing survival analysis, thus overestimating overall survival. Fewer studies still looked into potential causes of abandonment, and no study formally evaluated risk factors. These results unveil a “lost” patient cohort unaccounted for in studies, such that reported outcomes are skewed in favor of treatment success, whilst at the same time preventing the problem of abandonment being recognized and addressed.

There is however cause for hope. Although we showed overall higher AR in lower-middle income countries compared to upper-middle income countries, within each group there was significant variability.”

### Reference

1. Seah T, Zhang C, Halbert J, et al. The magnitude and predictors of therapy abandonment in pediatric central nervous system tumors in low- and middle-income countries: systematic review and meta-analysis. *Pediatr Blood Cancer* 2019;66:e27692.



### Blog

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# Neurology®

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